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ABSTRACT

This book reports a study of the outcomes of home-based family preservation services for abusive and neglectful families in Los Angeles County. Using the Family Assessment Form, the research project evaluated services provided by two voluntary agencies, and focused on changes in family functioning between the opening and closing of services during a yearlong follow-up period after services were completed, and over a 15-month period. It also measured changes in child behavior, home environment, traits of caregivers, and placement outcomes for children. Findings indicated that there were small but significant improvements in multiple aspects of family functioning in the service group but none in the comparison group. Home stimulation for infants and toddlers and elementary school children's behavior improved for the service group more than for the comparison group during the service period. Personal strengths of parents were associated with improvement in family functioning and child behavior. The service delivery model was not related to changes in family functioning. Parents and professionals defined problems and perceived improvement differently. Service group families were more satisfied with services than comparison families. Families referred by community-based sources were more successful in service than families referred by the Department of Child and Family Services. Psychological characteristics of parents were not influenced by services. There were no differences in placement rates or types for children in the service and comparison group families. (Appendices contain the Family Assessment Form and a description of the Family Services System Model. Each chapter contains references.) (KB)

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